

The Builder.

No. CCCL.

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PICCADILLY has been considerably improved during the last three or four years: by widening the road and footways, and reducing (though less than should have been done) its steep acclivity, it has been rendered a very noble and commodious entrance to the metropolis. The ground-owners on the north side have further improvements in view, and it is proposed, if we understand rightly, as the present leases expire, to prohibit shops, and reserve the frontage solely for private residences of good class.

A map of London, of the time of Elizabeth, shows what is called Piccadilly as a rudely defined road out of the town, with one or two houses at the angle where the road which afterwards became Regent-street turned off, and a windmill a little to the east of this, the recollection of which is still preserved by "Windmill-street." The origin of the name, Piccadilly, seems uncertain, but it was thought by some, at the commencement of the seventeenth century—when it was equally as now a matter of doubt—to have been given to a noted house there, as being the skirt or fringe of the town,—*picardill*, or *pickadil*, being a kind of stiff collar, also a fringe or edging to the skirt of a garment; while others said it took that name, because "one Higgins, a tailor, who built it, got most of his estate by pickadillies, which in the last age were much worn in England;"* and a third set, that it was because the pickadillies were sold there. Mr. Cunningham, in his "Hand Book for London," gives many curious particulars in connection with Piccadilly: he says the earliest allusion to it is by Gerard, who observes in his "Herbal" (1596), "that the small wild buglosse grows upon the drie ditch bankes about Pickadilla." "Pickadilly Helle" is mentioned in the accounts of the overseers of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, 1623. This building was afterwards sold to Captain Pantow, who gave his name to a neighbouring square and street. Lord Clarendon (1641) describes Pickadilly as "a fair house for entertainment and gaming, with handsome gravel walks with shade," with an upper and lower bowling-green. The first Piccadilly, as a street, was a very short line of road running no farther west than Sackville-street. Coventry-street preserves the name of Mr. Secretary Coventry, of the reign of Charles II., whose garden wall ran along part of Pantow-street and Osendon-street. Part of Piccadilly, namely, from Devonshire House to Hyde Park-corner, in 1734, resembled the New-road in the number of statues' yards, and it was the same in 1757, when it was said,—

"And now from Hyde Park-corner come
The gods of Athens and of Rome;
Hesperus' capids take their places,
With Venus and the domus Græcæ."†

Many of our readers remember the little toll-house at the "Corner," and its rude and rural accompaniments:—Apeley House, St. George's Hospital, and the stone Entrances to

the Parks have all been erected within a few years.

The last and most important improvement to the locality comes in the shape of the mansion now in course of completion for Henry Thomas Hope, Esq., the member for Gloucester, at the corner of Down-street, erected under the joint superintendence of M. Dossillon, a French architect, and Professor Donaldson. Annexed we give a view of the house from the south-west.* It has a frontage of 70 feet in Piccadilly and 64 feet in Down-street, measuring the two faces to where they would meet at the point; but the angle is cut off to give a face of 10 feet, which admits an angle window on each of the principal floors. The fronts are wholly faced with Caen stone,† and have panels of decorative marbles in the piers between the windows. The total height from the level of the street to the top of the balustrade may be called 62 feet. The windows are novel in the arrangement, and the treatment of those in the attic story particularly good. The general effect of the exterior, as a whole, is much injured by the oppressive pile of chimneys on the east side. The details throughout, especially inside, show very careful and elegant drawing, and the carving, wholly by French carvers, is exceedingly well executed.

The entrance, beneath an enriched porch, is in the centre of the Down-street front, and includes some of the best work about the building. The door is of wainscot, enriched with carving. The grand staircase and hall occupy the centre of the building, extending from the entrance eastward, and will present, when finished, some novel and piquant effects. A short central flight of stone steps leads from the entrance to the upper hall, which is paved with various coloured marbles in patterns (and on the level of the dining-room floor), and thence a long flight, not yet up, will conduct to the drawing-room floor. The upper hall is fenced by an enclosure of mahogany and glass at the head of the stairs from the entrance-hall, and there is a similar enclosure at a short distance from the front wall, over the entrance-door, from the level of the dining-room floor, so as to form a communication, next Down-street, between the rooms separated by the hall.

The walls of both halls are formed into panels and ornamented pilasters, with white plaster, polished, the lower part having varied scagliola panels, and a marble plinth. The ceilings are enriched; and the upper hall has a skylight.

The two principal floors consist of three rooms each. Those forming the suite on the drawing-room floors are 36 feet by 22 feet, 28 feet 6 inches by 24 feet, and 34 feet by 24 feet,—a range of about 100 feet long. The principal floor is 16 feet 6 inches high; the dining-room floor, 15 feet 6 inches. The floors are fire-proof, consisting of cast-iron girders and tile arches.

And here we would, in parenthesis, make a remark. The Kent Fire Office has issued a list of instructions to assist persons to escape from premises when on fire. We will give one, which, if followed out, would hereafter render all others unnecessary, and that is, let buildings be so constructed that they will not take fire. As we have again and again shown, the majority of our ordinary dwelling-houses are positively built to burn. The loss which the community annually sustains through want

of foresight in this respect, is enormous, and the amount of grief, trouble, and privation which follows, can scarcely be estimated. Prevention is better than cure.

The ceilings are panelled and but slightly enriched, being prepared to receive coloured decorations, but these are not yet determined on. The windows are fitted up with French casements and are very large. They are provided with Soxell's patent rolling shutters.

In the angle-room (so to call it: the fireplace is beneath the window. The doors of the best rooms are of oak, carved, with the initial H, in shields. The room in Down-street, on the dining-room floor, north of the hall, is panelled with oak, and the ornamental ceiling is painted to imitate the same material. The wall above the panelling is hung with a green flock paper. The chimney piece here, the only one in the principal rooms yet up, is particularly elegant in the details, and will afford a subject for illustration hereafter. It is of *Pierre de Tonnerre*, with panels of Languedoc and other French marbles.

There will be no more pictures in the house than will serve as decorations to the rooms: Mr. Hope's collections have been removed to Deepdene.

There are two staircases besides the grand stairs, both somewhat confined. The only approach to the chamber floors is by one of these.

We have not space to say more of the upper rooms, than that they are provided with double sashes, that some of them have cast metal chimney-pieces bronzed, including caryatid figures, and that the walls are hung with monochrome flock papers.

The stables and coach-houses appear to have been designed and executed with great care, so as to combine all possible conveniences, particularly as to access, light, ventilation, and easy communication. They open into Market-street. The coach-houses on the ground-floor are paved with Orsi and Armani's lava on concrete, and are warmed by hot water. The stables are over these, and are approached by an inclined plane. The floor here is formed with brick arches and iron girders, and has first a layer of concrete on the arches, then a layer of lava, and, upon this small pavours, red and white, are laid herring-bone wise. There is accommodation for twelve horses: the mangers are enamelled on cast-iron, and the wall above these has a zinc lining. There is a lantern for light and ventilation; and around this, over the other part of the stable, are rooms for the attendants.

The kitchen department of the house is very complete, with a "lift" communicating with each floor, speaking tubes, &c. Gas is laid on throughout the mansion, except in the drawing-rooms and in the stable building; and there is a complete system of apparatus for warming the vestibule, staircase, and passages throughout.

The divisions of the bins in the wide-cellars are of slate. The ceilings and walls of the principal apartments are rendered wholly with plaster of Paris.

Messrs. W. Cubitt and Co. are the general contractors; but all the ornamental work, including the wainscot doors, the ceilings, stone carving, mahogany casements, iron railing, are by Frenchmen,—many of them indeed executed in Paris, although for what good reason it seems hard to say.

The building is enclosed with a particularly handsome iron railing, cast in Paris for the purpose, a portion of which we show on a

* Mount's "Glossographia," 1844.

† The stone-workers appear to have taken possession of the few houses in the New-road left unoccupied by the stone-masons and artificers, and have surpassed their neighbours in the process of disfigurement.

* See page 492.

† All the projections, cornices, window-caps, &c., are protected by sheet lead.